

LETTEE XVI

ALI-KUH, *June*

Two days before we left Chigakhor fierce
heat set in,
with a blue heat haze. Since then the
mercury has
reached 98° in the shade. The call to " Boot
and Saddle "
is at 3.45. Black flies, sand-flies, mosquitos,
scorpions,
and venomous spiders abound. There is no
hope of
change or clouds or showers until the
autumn. Greenery
is fast scorching up. "The heaven above is
as brass,
and the earth beneath is as iron." The sky is
a merciless
steely blue. The earth radiates heat far on
into the night.
" Man goeth forth to his work," not " till the
evening,"
but in the evening. The Ilyats, with their
great brown
flocks, march all night. The pools are dry, and
the lesser
streams have disappeared. The wheat on
the rain-lands
is scorched before the ears are full, and
when the stalks
are only six inches long. This is a normal
Persian
summer in Lat. 32° N. The only way of
fighting this
heat is never to yield to it, to plod on
persistently, and
never have an idle moment, but I do often
long for an
Edinburgh east wind, for drifting clouds and
rain, and
even for a chilly London fog! This same
country is
said to be buried under seven or eight feet
of snow in
winter.
On leaving Chigakhor we crossed a low hill
into the
Seligun valley, so fair and solitary a month
ago, now
brown and dusty, and swarming with
Ilyats and their
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